

TABLE 2 - DRAFT 2006 TRIENNIAL REVIEW PRIORITIES

Issue No.	Topic	Description	Priority Category
1	Revise waste discharge prohibition affecting piers in Lake Tahoe (2003 Triennial Review Priority)	Revision of the Basin Plan's provisions affecting the Lake Tahoe shorezone (including a prohibition against waste discharges from new pier construction in fish spawning habitat) to increase compatibility with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's (TRPA's) shorezone ordinance. Public draft Basin Plan amendments will be completed and circulated after TRPA takes final action on pending revisions to its shorezone ordinance.	High
2	Clarify Basin Plan language related to natural sources of pollutants and "controllable factors" (2003 Triennial Review Priority as part of a comprehensive Basin Plan update.)	The Lahontan Region includes many water bodies such as geothermal springs and inland saline lakes where natural geological processes have resulted in levels of certain constituents that exceed drinking water quality or California Toxics Rule standards. These constituents include Total Dissolved Solids (salinity), arsenic, and radioactive elements. Naturally poor quality has become an issue in relation to Clean Water Act Section 303(d) listing, effluent limitations in permits for geothermal discharges, and other Water Board activities. Water quality objectives may also be violated due to other factors that cannot be controlled through the Water Board's authority, including floods, droughts, and hydromodification (e.g., impoundments and the quality of water imported from other regions). The proposed amendments would strengthen and clarify existing language in the Basin plan that interprets compliance with water quality objectives in relation to "controllable factors."	High
3	Revise exemption criteria for waste discharge prohibitions affecting 100- year floodplains in the Truckee River and Little Truckee River watersheds.	Section 4.1 of the Basin Plan prohibits discharges or threatened discharges of waste within 100-year floodplains in the Truckee River and Little Truckee River watersheds, and allows exemptions for certain types of projects that benefit the public. Exemptions and exemption criteria could be considered for additional categories, including stream crossings for timber harvest operations, and flood plain disturbance for private projects in exchange for offsite restoration.	High

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4	Update water quality objective for turbidity applicable to surface waters of the Truckee River and Little Truckee River watersheds	The existing turbidity objective for surface waters of the Truckee River watershed is expressed as a mean of monthly means (MOMM, a long-term rolling average). It was based on limited monitoring data collected in the 1960s and 1970s that may not reflect the full range of seasonal and annual variation. In developing a revised objective or objectives, Water Board staff will review all available monitoring data and current scientific literature on turbidity in relation to protection of beneficial uses. The proposed new objective(s) will be expressed as annual or other short-term means rather than as MOMMs.	Medium
5	Mixing Zones	As defined in the State Water Board's "Policy for Implementation of Toxics Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays and Estuaries of California, 2005" (SIP) a mixing zone is "a limited volume of receiving water that is allocated for mixing with a wastewater discharge where water quality criteria can be exceeded without causing adverse effects to the overall water body." This policy allows Regional Water Boards to approve mixing zones in permits for discharges of certain toxic pollutants. However, the Lahontan Basin Plan does not currently include authority for the Water Board to grant mixing zones for other constituents. The proposed amendments would add policy language including general authority to grant mixing zones and specific conditions under which they may be granted.	Medium
6	Editorial update of entire plan (2003 Triennial Review Priority)	The Basin Plan would be updated to reflect laws, regulations and policies adopted or revised by the State Water and Regional Water Boards and other agencies since the plan took effect in 1995. Examples include the California Toxics Rule, the current statewide nonpoint source management plan and implementing policy, and recent legislation regarding enforcement and waivers of waste discharge requirements. Minor editorial changes would also be made, including corrections of typographical errors.	Medium

Issue No.	Topic	Description	Priority Category
7	Revised water quality objectives for Mojave River	Current numeric water quality objectives for the Mojave River date from the 1970s and 1980s. The Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation Authority (VWVRA) has proposed that site-specific objectives (SSOs) be developed for the segment of the river downstream from its discharge. VWVRA plans to conduct monitoring to provide data for use in development of SSOs. The amendments could revise objectives for Total Dissolved Solids, chloride, nitrate, and other constituents. Board staff could also consider updating objectives for other segments of the Mojave River and its tributaries. The data needed to develop SSOs may not be available until after the next (2009) Triennial Review.	Medium
8	Modify the Lahontan Basin Plan waste discharge prohibitions to include provisions for protection of additional prime groundwater recharge areas of the arid basins.	Existing prohibitions affecting groundwater include region-wide prohibitions against discharges of waste that cause violation of water quality objectives or further degradation of already degraded waters, and watershed-specific prohibitions against discharges from onsite wastewater disposal systems (septic systems). Additional studies could be needed to identify the boundaries of aquifers to be protected under this topic.	Medium
9	Develop specific water quality objectives for all major closed basin groundwaters within the Lahontan Region.	Basin Plan Table 2-2 designates beneficial uses for 345 separate ground water basins. Chapter 3 includes narrative water quality objectives that apply to all ground water basins. State drinking water standards (Maximum Contaminant Levels) now apply to all ground waters designated for the Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) beneficial use under existing water quality objectives for "Chemical Constituents" and Radioactivity. Since almost all groundwaters are designated for the MUN use, SSOs less stringent than state MCLs could probably not be justified. Water quality data are scarce for many basins, and this project could require significant time and resources for additional monitoring. If this topic is adopted as a 2006 Triennial Review priority, work between 2007 and 2010 should be focused on only one or a few groundwater basins.	Low

Issue No.	Topic	Description	Priority Category
10	Work with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) and the TRPA toward increased consistency of standards for shared waters (2003 Triennial Review Priority)	As part of the Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development program, Water Board staff has held periodic discussions of standards consistency with other agencies. Discussions of standards for the Lake Tahoe Basin are expected to continue under the TMDL program, and a specific set-aside of Basin Planning funds for the process is not recommended as a high 2006 Triennial Review priority.	Low
11	Narrative objectives for biocriteria (2003 Triennial Review Priority)	In order to protect the biological integrity of the nation's waters, the USEPA strongly encourages states to adopt water quality standards based on "biocriteria." Biocriteria may be narrative or numeric. Numeric biocriteria often use Indices of Biotic Integrity (IBIs) to provide a numeric ranking system for aquatic community health. Narrative biocriteria are statements that may include any or all of the following: a goal statement that the biological integrity of waters shall be preserved, protected and restored; a definition of biological integrity, and direction on determining compliance. In 2003, Water Board staff proposed development and adoption of narrative biocriteria as Basin Plan amendments, to provide direction for consideration of biological integrity in the Board's regulatory program, and a sound basis for use of IBIs prior to the formal adoption of numeric biocriteria. Since 2003, staff members of all Regional Water Boards have begun discussing the potential for development and adoption of statewide narrative biocriteria by the State Water Board. In the Lahontan Region, University of California studies to develop IBIs for streams in the eastern Sierra Nevada are now nearing completion. The results of these studies will be presented to the Board at a future meeting. Because of other pressing priorities, Lahontan Water Board staff now believe that integration of IBIs into the Water Board's regulatory programs should be addressed through policy direction from the Board to staff rather than through Basin Plan amendments.	Low

Issue No.	Topic	Description	Priority Category
12	Revise Wildlife Habitat beneficial use and/or develop site-specific objectives for Searles Lake (San Bernardino County) <i>(2003 Triennial Review Priority)</i>	The brine mining operation at Searles Lake creates waste brine ponds on the dry lake bed. Migratory birds are attracted to these ponds, and bird kills due to high salinity have occurred. The high salinity is from natural sources. The Basin Plan amendments proposed in Item 2 above may address this issue without the need for a specific amendment.	Low
13	Outstanding National Resource Water and/or BIOL use designation for Surprise Canyon creek, Panamint Valley watershed.	Wilderness Society requested designation to protect creek from further OHV damage.	Low